

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated July 11, 2006. Claims 1 to 5 and 7 to 27 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 22, 23 and 27 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge the withdrawal of the objection to the drawings. The cover page of the Office Action, however, indicated that drawings filed on October 6, 2005 were acceptable, whereas the Applicants believe that only some of those drawings were acceptable. It is thought that the Examiner intended to refer to the drawing for Figure 7, that was filed on April 28, 2006, as well as all other drawings that were filed on October 6, 2005.

Claim 12 was objected to for an informality that has been addressed by amendment above.

Claims 24 to 26 were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c), it being said that the "method is not further limited". In response, Applicants respectfully assert that the fact that independent and dependent claims are in different statutory classes does not, in itself, render the dependent claims improper. See MPEP § 608.01(n) (page 600-91, Revision 5, August 2006). It is therefore not understood how the observation at page 3 of the Office Action, namely that the "method is not further limited" is relevant to the inquiry under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c), and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 22, 23, 27, 28 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being incomplete. Claims 28 and 31 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejection. The rejection of the remaining claims is respectfully traversed.

In particular, and as understood from the Office Action, the rejection is raising questions over the nature of the apparatus by which the claimed method is performed. As so-understood, it is believed that the rejection is more concerned with the breadth of the claim rather than its indefiniteness. In Applicants' view, Claims 1, 22 and 23 very clearly specify methods for secure storage and for authentication, and as a consequence, the precise nature of the apparatus which performs the method is not relevant. Here, it should be remembered that breadth of a claim is not the same as indefiniteness. See MPEP § 2173.04 (page 2100-213, Revision 5, August 2006).

As for independent Claim 27, it is directed to an information apparatus which transmits encrypted data to a target device, such that the comments in the rejection are not understood.

All claims were further rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), primarily over U.S. Patent 6,711,677 (Wiegley) in view of an excerpt from a book by Menezes, et al., "Handbook of Applied Cryptography" (hereinafter "Menezes"). Claims 28 to 33 have been cancelled, as noted above, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejection. The remaining claims have been amended so as to emphasize the registration of a user-specific key pair of an authenticated user, which naturally affects the verification process, as explained in more detail below.

The invention concerns secure storage of a public key for encryption of data in a computing device that includes a user-specific key pair that is securely stored in the computing device. In particular, a user-specific key pair is stored in a secure registry when a user logs in. A public key is received from a printer and a digital signature is created for the public key by using the user-specific key pair. The digital signature created by using the user-specific key pair is verified, and specifically is verified responsive to a printing instruction.

By virtue of the foregoing, it is a feature of the invention that authenticity of a target public key is verified, and that verification occurs in response to recognition of a printing instruction.

It is moreover a feature that there is improved security because the public key signed by the key of an authenticated and logged-in user, and the public key stored in the storage area to be used, are verified to correspond with each other.

Applicants maintain their position that the applied art does not disclose or suggest at least the feature that authenticity of a target key is verified and that it is verified in response to recognition of a printing instruction. As Applicants understand the explanation at page 2 of the Office Action, although it is conceded that Wiegley does not explicitly describe that his verification process occurs "as a response to" recognition of a printing instruction, Wiegley's Figure 3A shows that verification occurs after initiation of a secure print session. Thus, according to the Office Action, Wiegley shows initiation of a secure print session, followed at some later time by verification of an encryption key. Accordingly, even though Wiegley does not explicitly show verification that is

"responsive" to recognition of a printing instruction, the Office Action has taken the position that since Wiegley's verification occurs after initiation of a print session, such an arrangement is sufficiently suggestive of the claimed arrangement.

As so-understood, the traversal of the rejection is maintained. Even accepting the position of the Office Action, strictly for the sake of argument, the fact that one action follows another does not at all imply that the second action is somehow responsive to the first. The claims herein very clearly specify that verification is responsive to recognition of a printing instruction. Wiegley's verification simply is not responsive to recognition of the printing instruction, as apparently conceded in the Office Action.

Moreover, as amended, the claims specify that the user-specific key pair is registered for an authenticated user who logs in to the computing device. In the verification step, the public key in the storage area and the public key in the secure registry are verified to correspond to each other. Wiegley, for its part, simply confirms the certificate of the printer, but does so in advance and does not verify its public key. Thus, not only does Wiegley verify under conditions that differ from the claimed arrangement, Wiegley also verifies against different keys.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the claims herein recite subject matter that would not have been obvious from any permissible combination of the applied art, and allowance of the claims herein is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,
California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to
our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael K. O'Neill", is written over a horizontal line.

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